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AN ACROSTIC POEM
ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Mansions of the Skies:

AN

ACROSTIC POEM

ON THE

Lord's Prayer

BY

W. P. CHILTON, JR.

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The Lord's Prayer,

SO UNIVERSALLY READ AND ADOPTED,

WILL ADMIT OF

NO DENOMINATIONAL DEDICATION

OF ANY POEM, SUGGESTED EITHER BY

Its Beautiful Language or its Devotional Sentiment :

AND

IN APPROVAL OF THAT LIBERALITY OF OPINION

WHICH HOLDS MERE SECTARIAN DIFFERENCES IN SUBORDINATION TO

THE SPIRIT AND COMMON AIM OF CHRISTIANITY,

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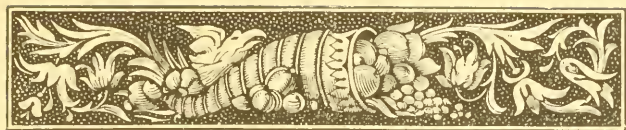
THE AUTHOR

TO

THE CHURCH MILITANT.







PREFACE.



WHAT is a beautiful idea which regards the old and new dispensations of the Bible as linked in a bond of indissoluble union; and the Bible in its entirety, as at the foundation of the Christian Religion. The two systems of the old and new polity, though different in form, are harmonious in spirit: the one is typical: the other, but a fulfillment of the first.

If some of the interesting and leading

events of the Bible have been successfully interwoven with the devotional prayer of our Saviour, the result should rather be commended, than the execution of the plan rigidly criticised. The author is aware of the difficulty of embracing a subject so comprehensive, in a space so limited, and of adjusting a poetic sentiment to an acrostic form so elaborate; but the work undertaken, the manner of its execution is submitted to the impartial judgment of the candid and intelligent reader.





THE LORD'S PRAYER

I.

O SWEET, celestial Home—yon gilded sky—
Undimmed in radiance for endless years,
Robed bright in beauty for eternity!
Fain would I sing the Bliss which there appears,
A way from life's unceasing cares and tears;
The Peace which lasting springs in that abode—
Home ever blest—where sin nor cares corrode!

II.

Each raptured glance of the unclouded eye

Revealeth beauty in that realm above,

Where shining orbs in fadeless splendor vie,

Harmonious round their radiant centre move,

Obedient to the sure behests of love;

All joined with music of the spheres, in time

Roll on, in pure accord and sacred chime.

III.

Thou spirit that the bright seraphic throng

Inspirest with accent sweet, and gladsome praise,

Now lend thine aid enchanting; may my song

Heaven's poesy portray in beauteous lays,

Enrapt by blissful dream of haleyon days;

All vain must be, save with thy sacred fire,

Vain else I'd now invoke my humble lyre.

IV.

Enkindle new, thy bright, angelic flame,
Nor cease to linger near while I portray,
How man, in his creation pure, and aim,
And Godlike image made, tho' human way,
Lost the bright joys of Eden's blissful day:
Lost his high state, and was condemned to roam
O'er the wide world, far from his peaceful home:

V.

When from the beauteous scenes of Paradise
Driven, he moved in penitence and pain
Before his Maker; no resplendent prize
Enrapturing him, nor cheering hope to gain
The joys of Eden; till in heavenly strain
His soul is quickened, by the voice which gave
Young Hope to cheer, while journeying to the
grave.

VI.

For cheers more sweetly than the Elysian goal
A waiting the redeemed, beyond the grave—
Mansion of rest—where dwells the sinless soul,
Enraptured evermore, with him who gave
This beauteous land of bliss, this power to save.
Hope fondly points to that mysterious plan,
Yon pearly realm and blissful home for man.

VII.

Knowledge seraphic, there alone can pry
Into Empyrean splendors beaming far,
Never appearing to the finite eye;
God is the gracious giver; no rude jar
Doth seem along those giddy heights; but star
O'er star revolving, each at his command,
Makes sure the glory of that better land.

VIII.

Can man, so frail a creature of the dust,
O'ercrest *here* by the great celestial sphere
Made by the skill inspired, that doth adjust
Each world of varying light—can man declare
There's no Creator of these works so fair?
How grandly speak the brilliant orbs which span
Yon spacious realm, that God alone doth scan?

IX.

Who is this God! whence sprang this mighty
power,
Infused in all created realms and space,
Leaving its print on every tree and flower,
Lingering on nature's ever-varied face,
Bearing, along with beauty, matchless grace,
Enlivening sweet our homeward journey on,
Both plainly seem to Deity alone.

X.

On yon bright pearly home and seraph land
No blemish doth appear; and angels trace
Each work perfected by the skilful hand
Of Providence; tho' sin did once embrace
No meagre part of that celestial place,
Embittering Heaven's peace and holy love,
And rousing the angelic hosts above.

XI.

Round the Majestic Throne sin could not dwell!
The great angelic throng poured forth, as one
Heaven-inspired, the Godlike Michael
Against the embattled hosts of Abaddon,
Swiftly to meet Heaven's now rebellious son.
In countless throngs the seraphs soon proclaim
The cause triumphant in Jehovah's name.

XII.

In conclave holy, was a just decree,
Sending the dragon hence that blest abode;
In chains of terror, he was loath to see
New evil, which his damning guilt forebode;
Heavenward he gazed, in dire, revengeful mood;
E'en hope has vanished, and profound despair
Awakes his soul, in dismal musing there.

XIII.

Vainly these restless, banished spirits seek,
E'en yet, the will of Heaven to oppose;
No gladdening words the cheerless ones could speak,
Grieving that their celestial reign must close;
In vain they writhe, and dare to interpose;
Vainly they seek to change the dire command,
E'er driving them from the bright heavenly land.

XIV.

U nited in the bonds of holy love,
S eraphic praise now blends with joy unfeigned,
T hat discord, from the happy scenes above,
H ad to Apollyon winged its way, and reigned
I n distant realms, where hope ne'er more obtained :
S weet contrast springs in joy and peaceful rest,
D welling in sinless regions of the blessed.

XV.

A way from God's bright realm the dragon turned—
Y et pined he for the glory of command
O n high ; deep thirst for power within him
burned :
U nnumbered schemes to repossess that land
R enewed his strength and his despairing band ;
D efeated still, in each fond hope to reign,
A mbition leads him other worlds to gain.

XVI.

In darkness deep, and wild despair now chained,
Lingered no hope within his guilty breast;
Yet potent still for wrong, he ne'er refrained—
Because of his dire ruin—to arrest
Reason's fell sway, which made him so oppressed :
Each aim was his, and sought this end alone—
Against his God, to rear his dismal throne.

XVII.

Dwelling in sullen grandeur, now supreme
Among the fallen angel spirits there;
Ne'er ceasing, as a wild, impetuous stream,
Dashing its raging current far and near,
Fiercely to war 'gainst all to Heaven dear;
O'er fairest fields his emissaries move,
Resolved against the beauteous land of love.

XVIII.

God fashioned now the earth, by sweet command,
In form and beauty peerless; and by word
Vision of wonders gave, that o'er the land
Each day were formed—fair handwork of the
Lord—

Unrivalled wisdom of the Triune God!

Six days in all, creation He could span,

On seventh He rested, and gave this man.

XIX.

Upon this new-made orb, a paradise,

Redolent with odors sweet from flowery vale,

That bore the impress of the bending skies,

Receiving loveliness, which did regale

Each tree and meadow, shrub and blossom frail;

Shone forth a peaceful home, with joys replete,

Perchance, where love the soul would ever greet.

XX

Amid this blissful scene and wondrous frame—
Sweet home of gladness and of works so fair—
Satan, in Eden comes, with artful name,
Enticing Eve, of matchless beauty there;
Smoothly he speaks, and fills her soul with care.
All his vile counsels, veiled in deep disguise,
Seem thus to shine in livery of the skies.

XXI.

When evening's shade its mantle threw o'er day—
Ere nightfall—Adam moved 'mong favored bowers
Forlorn, with saddened heart, oppressed: no ray
Of hope was his, nor cheer from earth's sweet
flowers;
Rest came ne'er more, but long and weary hours.
God's mercy still prevailed, as he did move,
In silence pure, along the trembling grove.

XXII.

Voice of Jehovah ! dread commanding tone !
Eden's fair plains are filled with awe profound,
To hear the sentence from the sovereign throne,
Harrowing the soul in dark transgression found.
On the vile serpent Eve's first sins rebound ;
So Adam, by Eve's siren voice so sweet
Entranced, the long-forbidden fruit did eat.

XXIII.

Where now is hope in Eden's beauteous plan ?
Has reason yielded now to fell despair ?
Oh no ! God a dear promise gives to man :
The only Son, who made the earth so fair—
Redeemer of mankind—descends to bear,
E'en on His soul so pure, the sinner's blame,
Sin to atone, and share the culprit's shame.

XXIV.

Pure paradise on earth no more could be
A joyous home for man—but lost estate;
Sorrow and toil was now Heaven's just decree,
Subscribed and sealed, which angels thus relate,
As Cherubim attest the saddened fate.
God, pitying them, a cheering hope doth lend,
As the grieved pair their dismal way descend.

XXV.

Inspired with hope new Paradise to gain,
Now promised of the bright celestial land,
Sweet incense, blent with music's charming strain,
To Heaven ascends; and there with seraphs' band,
United song, resounds the golden strand:
Sweetly the answering spirit fills the soul
Anew with hope of the celestial goal.

XXVI.

New hope and love, with Abel's incense pure,
Dawn brightly now, and point to climes of rest,
Lustrous with glory always to endure,
Enriched with treasure of divine bequest—
A peaceful, happy home, forever blest.
Down from the golden realm—the Great White
Throne—

Ummingled rays of mercy, lingering, shone.

XXVII.

Sweet spirit! from thy lofty sphere serene,
Now linger o'er this heart communion pure,
Of man and Creator; this gloried scene,
That wakes in ecstacy the soul, secure
In its bright realm, where sin can ne'er allure:
Ne'er sweeter chime along Heaven's Archway ran,
Than welcomed this blest gift of hope to man.

XXVIII.

Over the land, in rapid course of time,
The vilest sins prevailed, in deed and aim;
Evil imaginings, that lead to crime,
Making Jehovah grieve that He could claim,
Perchance, few subjects loyal to His name:
Tho' Enoch, faithful, walked in peace with God,
And righteous Noah escaped the mighty flood.

XXIX.

This humble seer a warning voice did raise,
In pity for the souls of men defiled;
Over the land, foretelling woful days—
Nor did they cease from sin, but e'en reviled,
Because of unbelief, which them beguiled;
Until the pangs of deep remorse unfold
The saddened fate the messenger foretold.

XXX.

Deriding once, these men the world would give
Even the face to see—long laughed to scorn.
Lingered with them a hope, tho' faint, to live;
In vain they cry, and bitterly they mourn;
Vainly now wish that man had ne'er been born.
Ere long the wrathful torrents of the sky
Rush o'er the plains, and shroud the mountains
high!

XXXI.

Unseen, bright seraphs weep the dreadful fall.
Sweetly there spans the curtain of the sky—
Fair charming sight—the bow of promise; all,
Regaled in matchless beauty for the eye
Of man—a shining covenant on high—
Measuring with gorgeous arch both land and sea,
E'en gilds all nature's choice and verdant lea.

XXXII.

Viewing the token beautiful, that gleams
In brilliant colors o'er the expanse of blue ;
Love springs forth freely as the gushing streams
Flowing thro' flowery lea of varying hue,
O'er fairest fields, refreshing each anew ;
Rekindled hope awakes in every breast,
That all mankind through Abram shall be blessed.

XXXIII.

How merciful, O God ! Thou art to man
In all Thy ways ! how bountiful in grace !
Ne'er failing, as in Israel's chosen plan—
Egypt's fair land, when fled, and Pharaoh's face—
In timely gifts, thy sons, thy love could trace ;
So, as we journey to the promised land,
Thy loving grace we seek, and guiding hand.

XXXIV.

Hope gleams more brightly with each fleeting year,
Ere long to see, as taught in prophecy,
King of the world, Messiah, now appear
In power, yet love and sacred majesty;
Ne'er more to yield His royal sceptred sway;
Go forth in meekness, rightfully to claim,
Dominion true, in His loved Father's name.

XXXV.

O sure prophetic token, star divine!
Magi and angels greet thee in the skies—
As the bright herald and celestial sign,
Near lingers where the holy infant lies,
Dazzling the sight in glad tho' strange surprise.
Through boundless realms the joyous tidings ring,
Hailing the advent of IMMANUEL, KING.

XXXVI.

Ere long the power of Deity is seen
P^{er}fected, in Messiah's human form ;
Oh ! blending pure of Heaven in nature's mien,
Wherein is strength to quell the raging storm ;
E'en power the troubled waters to transform ;
Relief bestows by all atoning grace,
And death makes joy in Jesus' shining face.

XXXVII.

Nor was Immanuel, Prince, from sorrow free.
Descended He from Heaven, for sacrifice ;
T^{he} bitter cup of dark Gethsemane
He drank ; then turned in love His tearful eyes
E'en to His Father, and for mercy cries !
G^{reat} tho' His grief and mental agony,
Love crowns His brow with royal majesty.

XXXVIII.

On the accursed tree our Saviour hangs!
Racked is his soul with anguish and with pain!
Yon Heaven grows black with anger o'er His pangs,
Frowning to see the Lamb of God now slain!
O'er Him bright angels bend in lengthened train;
Rent is the veil, while God's anointed dies!
Earth quakes with fear, and martyred saints arise!

XXXIX.

Verily, now, the Son of God is slain!
E'en from the sombre portals of the grave,
Rekindled love inspires the seraph train
Away the stone to roll; and Heaven gave
New power to Him, who fallen man did save.
Despised He was, still Mary Magdalene
E'en lingers where His body once had lain.

XL.

Visions of fadeless light beyond the skies
Enrapture Him, wreathed in immortal peace;
Rests He on earth, save as few kindred ties
Awake His soul to sweet communion's bliss.
Majestic risen from His dark decease,
Eternal glory on His way attends!
Now his joyed spirit with the Father blends.





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